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SIPDIS  
DEPT FOR IIP (BARONE, WEINTRAUB)  
WHA/PPD

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OEXC](#) [SCUL](#) [KPAO](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: US SPEAKER REQUEST: WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

SUMMARY: Post requests IIP's assistance to recruit a US business leader to visit Colombia to participate in a speaker program at an Intercollegiate Women in Business Conference sponsored by the NGO Women for Colombia Foundation in Bogot?????. Speaker would be keynote speaker at the conference and would also address a large group of young women students from various fields at Los Andes University, the most important private university in the country with a strong business leadership program. Schedule will also include other public affairs activities such as media encounters and a representational function. Visit would extend from April 21 through 24, 2010 and will be a follow-on program to the recently held Pathways Women Entrepreneurs Conference. Post's objective with this program is to focus the attention of young Colombian women on the potential of business creation for democratic strengthening. End summary.

BACKGROUND: Women for Colombia Foundation is a non-profit organization established 15 years ago with the purpose of advancing and promoting professional women to facilitate their participation in the country's development. The foundation promotes participation of women in economic, political and social development contexts. As such, the Foundation is supporting the country's efforts to promote examples of women in business leadership positions who can be seen as role models for women business owners, executives, and managers. For the sustainable development and growth of the Colombian economy, the business sector recognizes the importance of women's contribution in developing small and medium size businesses. Although there are some associations, governmental and non-governmental organizations that promote equal opportunities for women, there are is no one association that provides mentoring or other types of leadership training. Just over the recent years women in Colombia have been gaining an important role in business. Only a few women have reached top positions. Women in small and medium enterprises now are eager to learn about developing leadership skills and hear from someone they could use as a role model in economic, political and social development contexts.

US SPEAKER, PROGRAM AND AUDIENCE: The speaker should be prepared to address two talks on entrepreneurship: one for about 500 women students at the Intercollegiate Women in Business Conference sponsored by Women for Colombia Foundation, focusing on development of entrepreneurial attitudes for young professional women. Presentation should address value added of exploring creative and innovative thinking for success in the executive world as well as in business development. A second talk would address professional women already in the labor force either as business owners or employed in middle to high level positions in the private sector. Since its creation, the Intercollegiate Women in Business Conference has sought to support women university students in their transition process from the academic to the professional world, informing them about multiple business opportunities for women through specialized panels addressing most dynamic sectors of Colombia's economy. The conference is attended by over 500 young women eager to learn from the successful professional experience of women leaders around the world. We would like to request that IIP

recruit a woman leader active in the international entrepreneurial community with extensive experience on advancing youth entrepreneurship and community service around the world that could serve as a leadership model for students shaping their professional careers as well as for young professionals. Post would like to suggest Michelle Messina, President of the global direction and strategy agency, Explora International LLC, as best speaker for the program. Messina recently took part in the Pathways Women Entrepreneurs Conference as a mentor of Colombian participant Esperanza Morales.

CONTROL OFFICER: Control Officer for this program is CAO Rex Moser. Office phone: 571-315-2201. Home phone: 571-317-2079; Mobile: 310-260-7093

Program Coordinator is CAS Pilar Cabrera. Office phone: 571-315-2201. Home phone: 571-627-0934. Mobile: 314-330-0948.

FUNDING SPECIFICS: Program fully funded out of I-Bucks

WAIVER: Mission requests waiver of the Department's policy not to send speakers to countries to which the State Department advises US citizens not to travel. All events in this program will take place in Bogot???? which is not indicated in the State Department travel

advisory as a particular area of caution. RSO concurs with proposed travel and program, and will arrange a security briefing for the speaker. Speaker will be lodged in RSO approved hotels and will be accompanied by a PAS officer and senior FSN for all programs. Other than minor theft incidents no speakers have encountered any problems or threats to their safety in either of these cities.  
BROWNFIELD